

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 16, 2023

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Raymond, Representatives Boyle, Cannon, McCann, Ehlers, Gallagher, Garner, Nelsen, Pickett, Sauter, Mathias (Woodings), Nash, Roberts

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Boyle, Cannon, Nash

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Andrus called the meeting to order at 1:41 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Sauter** made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2023 meeting.
Motion carried by voice vote.

Brent Olmstead, University of Idaho (U o I), Government Affairs, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs), presented a summary of the Legislative report on the Veterinary Needs Task Force, which highlighted the critical issue of the shortage of rural veterinarians in Idaho. The report discussed the adverse effects of this shortage and evaluated the current veterinary medicine program, Washington-Idaho-Montana-Utah (WIMU), along with other existing programs. The task force also made recommendations to address the issue.

Braden Jensen, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, introduced **Emma Rae Parsons**, an intern from Arco. Mr. Jensen said Idaho is a livestock state, with an estimated number of food-animals of 2,762,000. Approximately 3-4% of new veterinary graduates enter food-animal related practice. High education costs, lower potential earnings, and increased injury risk are all hurdles for rural veterinarians. This has resulted in a shortage of rural veterinarians in Idaho. Idaho Farm Bureau Federation supports efforts to incentivize vet students studying large food animal medicine to practice in Idaho, and offers over \$100K in scholarships per year.

Dr. Mark McGuire, CALs, Associate Dean of Research, said a lack of veterinarians impacts the growth of Idaho's animal industries. The WIMU Veterinarian Degree Program funds out of state tuition at Washington State University for 44 residents annually, as well as faculty and operating expenses at U of I to teach food-animal rotations for WIMU students throughout Idaho. The estimated shortage of veterinarians in Idaho is 40 and growing.

Dr. Robert Collier, U OF I, CALs, Chair, Veterinary and Food Science, said the task force research looked at other successful programs, including Washington-Wyoming-Alaska-Montana-Idaho (WWAMI) Medical Education and the Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas. The recommendations are: Expand the program size from 11 to students 20; Initiate a Targeted Rural Veterinary Program (TRVP) for Idaho WIMU students; and Idaho WIMU students must pay back year of out-of state tuition if they do not locate to Idaho after graduation.

Dr. Leibsle, Idaho State Veterinarian, responded to committee questions regarding staggering the admissions process to those who may be considering going into production animal medicine, saying it would be difficult for a student to promise to become a production animal veterinarian after graduation.

TK Kuwahara, Idaho Beef Council, said the guiding statements and objectives are to expand global and domestic consumer demand for beef and to enhance the profitability of the Idaho beef industry through investments in strategic initiatives. The Idaho Beef Council Guiding Principle is to strive to be a respected and trusted beef marketing organization accountable to all Idaho beef producers and responsible for ensuring effective and efficient use of checkoff funds. The Council objectives are to: Grow consumers' trust in beef and Idaho beef production; Expand consumer's knowledge of the heritage and commitment to the sustainability of Idaho's multi-generational family farms and ranches; Increase demand for Idaho and Pacific Northwest beef in domestic and key export markets; Develop and inspire the next generation of Idaho beef industry stakeholders.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee the meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Representative Kevin Andrus
Chair

Jayne Feik
Secretary